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DEPT FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A,
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [AF](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ OFFICIALS SEE MANAS IMPACT ON WAR IN
AFGHANISTAN

REF: BISHKEK 544

Classified By: AMBASSADOR WILLIAM WOOD 1.4 (B) and (D)

[¶1.](#) (SBU) Summary: The Ambassador hosted Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch and a six member delegation of Kyrgyz senior officials to Afghanistan June 13-14 to allow them to better understand the importance of Manas Air Base in supporting coalition military and reconstruction efforts. The delegation met with President Karzai, COMISAF General Dan McNeill and other GOA and U.S. military officials. In his meeting with the Kyrgyz, MFA Senior Advisor Davood Maudrian voiced concerns over the recent seizure of ammunition for Afghanistan. The delegation also met with Afghan MPs and discussed parliamentary procedure and Afghan commercial activity in Central Asia. Combined Joint Task Force-82 (CJTF-82) hosted the delegation at Bagram and took them to see frontline coalition operations in Jalalabad and Nuristan. End Summary.

MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KARZAI

[¶2.](#) (C) The Kyrgyz delegation, First Deputy Minister of Defense General-Major Kybanychbek Oruzbayev, Chief Inspector of the National Security Council, Major-General Kybanychbek, Deputy Foreign Minister Talai Kydryov, and Parliamentary Deputies Ishak Masaliyev and Keldibekov, accompanied by Ambassador Wood met with President Karzai.

[¶3.](#) (C) Asked to give an assessment of the situation in Afghanistan today, Karzai said it was first necessary to review the past 15 years, the Taliban legacy, and the international community's reluctance to become involved until [¶2001](#). He said that if the Coalition had not intervened to help Afghanistan after September 11, the Taliban and Al Qaeda would have spread to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan by now. Afghans, Karzai said, cannot help themselves without Western help, much less prevent the problems from spreading elsewhere; "You were lucky that Afghanistan was rescued and liberated," he stated to the Kyrgyz. On the present situation, Karzai portrayed a country with serious problems, still at war, but making progress.

[¶4.](#) (C) Karzai asked the Kyrgyz policymakers to take a message back to President Bakiyev and the Kyrgyz people. There are

two choices: a civilized life with prosperity or a return to the Stone Age and disaster; Afghanistan has chosen the former and it is the only choice for the region. Afghanistan is on the front line against terror, but Kyrgyzstan is in the supporting line by providing the base; both countries, Karzai said, are providing security for the whole region.

¶5. (C) The Kyrgyz were visibly impressed, with a number of government officials and one deputy saying that they understood the need to support Afghanistan. Almost all of them emphasized the importance of economic reconstruction and Kyrgyzstan's strong desire to play a supporting role in that effort.

COMISAF: WE ARE HERE UNTIL THE AFGHANS CAN STAND ON THEIR OWN

¶6. (C) COMISAF General Dan McNeill provided an overview of the five ISAF commands and the situation each one faces. He noted that ISAF is an interim force to provide time and space, until the Afghans are ready to "do the job themselves." MacNeill stressed this is important to the Kyrgyz, because regional stability depends on the Coalition's ability to create a secure and stable Afghanistan. McNeill noted there are varying predictions about how long a Coalition force will be necessary. The Afghans themselves believe that the army will be stood up in a year and they will require assistance for three more years. The UN believes that a force will be necessary until 2017 and NATO member will review whether they will stay in 2009. U.S. commitment is firm; we will stay until the Afghans can stand up on their own.

KYRGYZ VISIT BAGRAM AIRBASE

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¶7. (SBU) Combined Joint Task Force-82 (CJTF-82) Commander Major General Rodriguez briefed the delegation at Bagram Airbase on the strategic importance of Manas Air Base in airlift support for coalition operations in Regional Command (RC) East. The delegation was engaged in the discussion and asked about improvements on security and the number of foreign fighters in the region.

FRONTLINE OPERATIONS OBSERVED AT JALALABAD AND NURISTAN

¶8. (SBU) Following the briefing, CTJF-82 took the delegation to U.S. led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) at Jalalabad and Nuristan, where they were briefed by the PRT commander at each location and given an opportunity to see coalition operations. Both PRT commanders told the Kyrgyz that all military personnel at Jalalabad and Nuristan had traveled through Manas en route to their PRT. Additionally, the commanders' reports on recent U.S. and Afghan casualties reinforced the message to the Kyrgyz that there are still military operations ongoing against the Taliban. General Mamyrkulov was visibly moved in Jalalabad as he shared his experiences in Jalalabad during the Soviet occupation to the PRT Commander. In Nuristan, Masaliyev and Keldibekov both remarked about the difficult fighting conditions U.S. forces faced from the desolate terrain.

MFA HIGHLIGHTS CONCERN ABOUT WEAPONS SEIZURE

¶9. (C) In a meeting at the Afghan Foreign Ministry, the ForMin's Senior Advisor Davood Moradian asked the Kyrgyz MPs for help for a positive outcome to the recent seizure of weapons (intended for shipment to Bagram Airbase) at Ganci Airbase in Kyrgyzstan. MP Masaliyev said that it was illegal for weapons to be transited through the base (on the basis of Kyrgyz law). He said that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the base with the GOKG does not stipulate that weapons and ammunition can be transited, only "personal weapons" carried by the military on their person. Ambassador Yovanovitch explained that the MOU did not make any distinction about the kind of goods that can transit the

base. Masaliyev said, when asked, Kyrgyz officials assured him that no weapons or ammo would be transiting through Ganci airbase. When asked by Masaliyev to comment, Moradian said that he was not in a position to comment either on what was in the bilateral (Kyrgyz-U.S.) MOU or on the Kyrgyz law and what it might stipulate about transit of goods through Kyrgyzstan. The delegation agreed that it was not the right time to discuss Kyrgyz law and that they could talk about it amongst themselves later.

MPs DISCUSS PRIORITIES

¶10. (C) The delegation discussed parliamentary procedure and Afghan commercial activity in Central Asia with a group of Afghan MPs. Afghan MPs Sayed Kazimi, Sardar Mohammad and Rahmaan Oghli, Haji Mohammad Aref Zarif and Shukria Paikan Ahmadi attended. In response to Kyrgyz MP questions, Kazimi replied that "we have lots in common with the international community, especially when it comes to the fight with terrorism, the fight against drugs, and the support for democracy." He added that Afghanistan would not accept Communism, and neither will it accept the Taliban. Kazimi noted that after stability, improving the economy is the highest priority in Parliament. Kazimi explained that the international community presence was invited by the GOA, and "their presence is for the betterment of Afghanistan."

¶11. (C) Kyrgyz MPs asked about the Afghan parliamentary role and Haji Zarif replied that Parliament has a positive role in influencing the stability in the region. He added that Afghans can differentiate between their enemies and their friends, and stressed that "we are a civilized people." He said that the Afghans kicked out the Taliban and, without Afghan support for the current ISAF counterinsurgency campaign, the international security forces would never win the war, "even if they had ten times the troops they currently have here."

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COMMENT

12.(SBU) The trip to Afghanistan made a visible impression on the Kyrgyz. Given the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, it was an emotional journey for some, especially General Mamyrkulov, who had fought in Jalalabad. A recurring question was how the Coalition would ensure it would be more successful than the Soviets were. Other recurring themes included queries regarding how long the war would go on, and specifically how long the Coalition would require the Manas Air Base, as well as interest in assisting Afghanistan's economic recovery.

¶13. (SBU) The Kyrgyz came away with the realization that the war has not been won yet. Some also realized that if the war was not won, they could be fighting the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Kyrgyzstan. Under the powerful gaze of President Karzai, everyone except Masaliyev pledged support for Afghanistan, but it remains to be seen what they will do when they are back in Bishkek.

WOOD